

Ian Wieck
St Margaret's Church,
Angmering,
BN16 4JS,

Our reference: G98

Date: 9/7/17

Dear Ian

Tree inspection Monterey pine in St Margaret's churchyard

1. I refer to your instructions asking me to attend on site with you to consider the health of one Monterey pine (T72) located in the churchyard and to make recommendations for any work that may be considered necessary. The tree was last inspected by me on 13th June 2016 and comments on its condition were included in my report dated 18th July 2016 as follows:

I noted that the large Monterey cypress T72 was showing signs of dieback in the lower crown but the upper crown appeared to be healthy. Removal of deadwood will be necessary in due course.

2. I conjectured at that time that there might be a possibility that the dieback could be associated with fungal infection in the roots.
3. I met you and several others on site on 21st June 2017 and carried out a further ground level inspection which included tapping around the base of the trunk to detect possible decay and looking to see if there was evidence of fungal fruiting bodies. The trunk yielded no sounds indicative of significant internal decay and there were no live fruit bodies and no remains of disintegrated fruit bodies visible. I therefore discount root decay as a factor in the dieback.
4. Observing the lower branches which had previously exhibited dieback of foliage (needles) through binoculars leads me to the belief that the most likely cause of dieback is infestation with the Pine Shoot Beetle (*Tomicus piniperda*) as shown in Figure 1. The symptoms are not particularly consistent with fungal leaf blight. Unfortunately, there is no treatment to control the beetle but infestation is rarely fatal. The upper crown was largely healthy with only a few scattered shoots showing damage and browning (Figure 2). The lower branches, however, have been heavily damaged and have very little foliage left on them and I recommend that they should be removed in order to improve the aesthetic appearance of the tree and to remove sites for beetle larvae, thus reducing re-infection rates.
5. I recommend that three branches should be removed by cutting back to the main trunk. The branches to be removed are shown on the photograph at Figure 3. Removal of the branches will have a negligible effect on the health of the tree, but will improve its appearance.

Figure 1. Dieback of shoot and needles in single shoot surrounded by healthy shoots suggests beetle damage rather than fungal needle blight.



Figure 2. The upper crown of the Monterey pine is largely healthy – the lower branches exhibit the most dieback.



Figure 3. Locations of three branches (1 – 3) recommended to be removed.



6. Since the tree is protected you will need to make an application to the local authority for permission to carry out the work.
7. I believe that the tree has a reasonably long safe useful life but its condition will need to be monitored.
8. I trust that this letter report is satisfactory for your purposes but if you wish to obtain further advice please feel free to call.

Yours sincerely

Martin Dobson

Dr Martin Dobson

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